

2025

# **Report on Compliance with Court-Ordered Requirements**

SNAP/APA

STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: JULY 1, 2025

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction .....	2
II. Federal Correspondence and Oversight .....	2
See Attachment 1:.....	3
III. Timely Processing of Applications .....	3
A. Workload Data .....	3
See Attachment 3:.....	4
B. IT Modernization .....	4
See Attachment 4:.....	6
C. Staffing Improvements.....	6
See Attachment 5:.....	7
D. Non-Merit Contract Staff .....	7
See Attachment 6:.....	7
E. Training and Development.....	8
See Attachment 7:.....	8
IV. Efforts to Streamline Administration of Programs.....	9
See Attachment 2:.....	10
V. Conclusion .....	10
Attachment 1 .....	11
Attachment 2 .....	17
Attachment 3 .....	24
Attachment 4 .....	33
Attachment 5 .....	49
Attachment 6 .....	55
Attachment 7 .....	57

## I. Introduction

This report provides the Court with the Alaska Department of Health's July 2025 update on compliance with court-ordered requirements related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Adult Public Assistance (APA). It outlines progress made by the Division of Public Assistance to reduce processing delays, strengthen workforce capacity, modernize systems, and implement operational improvements. Updates reflect activity through June and planned for early July 2025.

## II. Federal Correspondence and Oversight

The Alaska Department of Health and Division of Public Assistance continue to prioritize close collaboration with federal partners. In June, the Division increased the frequency of its engagement with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), moving from monthly to biweekly meetings to support continued progress on technical assistance and corrective action planning.

Following technical assistance from FNS on May 29, 2025, the Division submitted an updated Quality Control (QC) Investment Plan on June 17, 2025. While the scope of proposed investments remains the same, Alaska is currently working with FNS to clarify the identified root causes and associated fiscal estimates. These discussions remain informal and are part of an ongoing collaborative process to ensure alignment with federal expectations prior to formal approval.

In addition, FNS formally closed the Fiscal Year 2024 SNAP Quality Control Integrity Review (QCIR) on June 18, 2025, confirming that Alaska had addressed all three findings identified in the November 2024 report. Two findings were downgraded to observations, and the third—related to supervisory reviews—was resolved through documentation of second-party

review procedures. FNS acknowledged the state's strong documentation practices and organizational structure.

The Division also received new federal guidance in June regarding eligibility changes for individuals paroled under the Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) program. Following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to lift the injunction, states were instructed to implement eligibility redeterminations in accordance with DHS guidance and SNAP program rules. Additionally, FNS issued revised parameters for participation in a pilot designed to block high-risk SNAP transactions, such as out-of-state or online purchases, by default. The Division is reviewing these updates to assess operational implications and potential participation.

See Attachment 1:

- FNS Closure Letter – FY 2024 SNAP QCIR (June 18, 2025)
- FNS Guidance on Termination of CHNV Parole (June 13, 2025)
- FNS Memo – SNAP Blocking Transaction Pilot (June 3, 2025)

### III. Timely Processing of Applications

#### A. Workload Data

As of July 2025, the Division of Public Assistance reports 4,632 pending SNAP and APA applications and recertifications, a decrease of 703 cases from June. The SNAP backlog declined by 16%, from 4,580 to 3,836, reflecting continued progress through focused staffing and process improvements. The APA backlog increased slightly from 755 to 796, primarily due to new applications.

SNAP timeliness metrics remained relatively stable. Six month average timeliness was 48% in June, compared to 49% in May. Slight decreases were noted in expedited (56% from 57%) and initial applications (60% from 62%), while recertification timeliness held at 20%. Average processing time rose modestly from 41 to 45 days. These marginal shifts underscore the balancing act between addressing aged cases and processing new ones promptly.

The Division continues to use targeted staffing assignments and structured lobby protocols to support timely service delivery. These efforts remain central to backlog reduction and compliance with federal and court-ordered expectations.

On June 5, 2025, leadership was notified of new issues affecting the ARIES eligibility system. Staff reported slowness, screens failing to load, errors during wrap-up, problems with Facilitated Marketplace application registration, and challenges printing Medicaid coupons in-office. External users also experienced intermittent access issues. While operations continue, these technical disruptions do affect the Division's ability to manage workload efficiently. This is noted for awareness, as such issues occasionally arise and may influence overall productivity due to the integrated nature of the Division's eligibility determination process.

See Attachment 3:

- July Report to the Court, 2025 Backlog Dashboard with Detail

## B. IT Modernization

The Division of Public Assistance continues to advance its modernization efforts aimed at improving access, efficiency, and system integration. In July, several major projects remained on track or reached critical implementation milestones.

The ILINX® Virtual Contact Center—designed to modernize the Division’s phone-based client service operations—was successfully launched in early June. With implementation complete, the system is now fully operational and supporting ongoing call center functions.

Meanwhile, the ILINX Casefiles Workflow Modernization project remains on schedule, with solution acceptance and go-live planning activities underway. This initiative is intended to simplify document handling and improve internal workflows across the Division.

The integration between ILINX and the CURRENT™ workload management system is also progressing. Application Programming Interface (API) functionality for task creation has been tested, and configuration work continues based on staff feedback. The Division anticipates this integration will reduce duplication and improve real-time task management.

Other projects, such as the Automated “Date Received” Capture and Long-Term Care workflow enhancements, are moving forward with user acceptance testing and updated requirements, respectively. These efforts are expected to reduce manual processes and support timely case processing, especially in high-complexity program areas.

The ILINX Multi-Services Application—designed to support intake across multiple, but not all, public assistance programs—remains on hold due to pending federal and internal approvals. The Division is awaiting clearance from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the State of Alaska’s internal Policy team. A formal project delay notice was issued in late May, and updates will be provided as reviews progress.

These modernization efforts support the Division's long-term goals of streamlining operations, reducing processing delays, and building a more accessible and resilient eligibility system.

See Attachment 4:

- Technology Modernization Tracker – June 2025
- Executive Status Portfolio Report – June 6, 2025
- IT Project Roadmap – Updated June 2025

### C. Staffing Improvements

The Division of Public Assistance continues to make targeted investments to strengthen its workforce and stabilize service delivery. In July, progress continued across both recruitment and retention efforts, with increased activity in key hiring categories and expanded support for field-based leadership.

Personnel action data for June 2025 show active movement across all eligibility job classes, including Eligibility Technician (ET) 1 through Eligibility Office Manager (EOM) 2. While transitions are ongoing, many personnel changes reflect staff staying within the Division—either through lateral transfers, promotions, or internal realignments. This trend underscores a positive pattern of retention and internal career development.

Recruitment reports confirm that a growing share of positions are advancing through the hiring process, with more PCNs reaching interview and hire-pending status compared to earlier months. Hiring incentives for ET2 positions continue to generate strong applicant interest and help shorten timelines.

Although DPA is exempt from the hiring freeze established under Administrative Order No. 358, the Division is applying the order thoughtfully. Programmatic positions essential to core operations continue to move forward, while classifications that include “administrative” in the title or description are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This ensures compliance with the spirit of the order while maintaining operational continuity.

These investments reflect the Division’s continued commitment to a stable, skilled workforce capable of delivering timely and accurate public assistance services.

See Attachment 5:

- Status of Eligibility Technician Positions – June 2025
- Personnel Actions Summary – June 2025

#### D. Non-Merit Contract Staff

The Division continues to utilize contracted staff to support core functions such as call center operations, returned mail processing, and application intake. As of June 2025, the contracted workforce includes 130 individuals, with the majority serving as Eligibility Associates assigned to the Virtual Contact Center.

These staff continue to provide essential support in handling high call volumes and completing administrative tasks that do not require eligibility determinations. The Division monitors staffing levels and contract performance to ensure alignment with program needs and service expectations.

See Attachment 6:

- Distribution and Status of Contracted Staff – June 2, 2025

## E. Training and Development

The Division continues to prioritize staff training and leadership development as part of its overall strategy to improve service delivery and program integrity. In June, the Division partnered with Change and Innovation Agency (C!A) to deliver an in-person Supervisor Academy. Held the week of June 16, the multi-day academy focused on practical leadership skills and peer learning, with positive feedback from participants on its relevance and impact.

MAGI (Modified Adjusted Gross Income Medicaid) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) training has transitioned to a primarily in-person format. The Division launched a regional cohort model in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska, with one cohort based in Ketchikan and Sitka (including a remote participant from Nome) and another in Anchorage and Wasilla. Initial feedback from learners has been very positive. Trainees report improved retention of information and greater confidence in their ability to process cases effectively when trained in person.

These MAGI/SNAP training programs span ten weeks, blending classroom instruction with on-the-job training and culminating in independent casework readiness. Training plans are also in progress for Adult Public Assistance (APA), APA Medicaid (APME), and the Heating Assistance Program (HAP), with targeted timelines based on hiring activity and staffing needs.

These efforts reflect the Division's continued investment in building a skilled and confident workforce capable of supporting accurate and timely benefit delivery.

See Attachment 7:

- Training and Development Update – July 2025

## IV. Efforts to Streamline Administration of Programs

The Division of Public Assistance continues to implement targeted improvements that support program efficiency and client access. In June, the Workload Management Matrix was updated to reflect several operational milestones and clarifications.

Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) remains on track for implementation in July for August 2025 SNAP benefits. Final system programming is underway, and training and public communications are being finalized to support a smooth transition.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved Alaska's request to implement a Standard Medical Deduction (SMD) demonstration waiver beginning August 1, 2025. This process is intended to simplify the eligibility determination process for applicants and the Division alike. The Division is coordinating with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to delay implementation while preserving the full four-year approval period.

The Division also launched its "DPA Office in a Box" outreach model, bringing in-person eligibility support directly to communities. Events were held in Kotzebue and Delta Junction in June, with additional outreach planned for the upcoming fiscal year.

The relocation of the University Center (UC) lobby in Anchorage has a planned completion date of June 30, just prior to the submission of this report. The newly configured space is intended to enhance seating, visibility, and overall functionality for both clients and staff. A message from the Director was shared with staff in advance of the move, outlining the improvements and expressing appreciation for their adaptability during the transition.

These updates reflect continued momentum in streamlining operations and enhancing service delivery in alignment with federal expectations and the Division's long-term modernization goals.

See Attachment 2:

- Workload Management Matrix – Updated July 2025
- Note from the Director – UC Lobby Improvements

## V. Conclusion

The Division continues to make steady progress toward timely and accurate processing of SNAP and APA cases. Efforts remain focused on reducing backlog, stabilizing staffing, and modernizing operations in alignment with federal guidance and court expectations. While challenges remain, the Division's investments in system improvements, policy simplification, and client access are demonstrating results and supporting long-term stability.